

REMARKS

This Amendment responds to the office action dated January 25, 2007.

The examiner has rejected claims 1-16, 18, 19 and 23-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,287,194 (Lobiondo) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,690,210 (Onuma).

Claims 1, 11, 18, 23 and 24 have been amended directly. Claims 2-10, 12-16 and 19 have been amended directly or by dependence on amended independent claims. Claims 1, 11, 18, 23 and 24 have been amended to comprise the element of receiving user input comprising a cluster printing selection, which identifies specific printing devices and a quantity of specific printing devices, the element of determining portions of spool data to be distributed to each of the specific printing devices and the element of distributing the portions of spool data to the specific printing devices using concurrent parallel playback to the printing devices.

Onuma teaches parallel processing of printer driver functions. Lobiondo teaches a method of serially distributing a print job to multiple printers by sequentially determining how much of the print job a printer can handle and allocating that part of the print job to that printer. After each allocation, the next printer is analyzed and an appropriate part of the print job is allocated to that printer until the print job is completely allocated. Combining the parallel processing of Onuma with the allocation method of Lobiondo may result in parallel processing of the sequential processes described in Lobiondo wherein data is sent to individual printers in series, but this combination does not disclose *concurrent* parallel playback to multiple printing

devices as described in the currently-amended claims. Neither Lobiondo nor Onuma nor the combination thereof teach processes that work with multiple printers at the same time.

Furthermore these claims comprise the limitation of receiving user input that specifies specific printers as selected by a user. The processes of Lobiondo select printers automatically and do not provide for user selection. Accordingly, these claims, as amended, are patentable over the combination of Lobiondo and Onuma.

Independent claims 2-10, 12-16 and 19 comprise all the limitations of their parent claims and are patentable for the reasons stated above in relation to those claims.

The examiner has also rejected claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lobiondo (U.S. Patent No. 5,287,194) ("Lobiondo") and U.S. Patent No. 6,690,210 (Onuma) as applied to claim 11 above, and further in view of (U.S. Patent No. 6,049,394) ("Fukushima").

Claim 17 is dependent on claim 11, which comprises the elements of "despooling said spool data in accordance with said cluster printing selection wherein said despooling comprises distribution of said print task to said specific printing devices in substantial proportion to each of said specific printing device's output capacity and wherein said despooling further comprises concurrent parallel playback of spool data to printer drivers corresponding to each of said specific printing devices." The combination of Fukushima, Lobiondo and Onuma do not teach this element. The examiner relies on Fukushima to teach estimating printer capability, however, Fukushima does not teach *concurrent*

parallel playback of spool data to multiple printer drivers. Accordingly, this claim is patentable for the reasons stated above in relation to claim 1.

The examiner has also rejected claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lobiondo (U.S. Patent No. 5,287,194) ("Lobiondo") and U.S. Patent No. 6,690,210 (Onuma) as applied to claim 18 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,665,082 ("Takeoka").

Claim 20 is dependent on claim 18, which comprises the element of "despooling said spool data in accordance with said cluster printing selection wherein said despooling comprises distribution of said print task to said ~~multiple~~ specific printing devices in substantial proportion to each of said ~~multiple~~ specific printing device's output capacity and wherein said despooling further comprises concurrent parallel playback of spool data to multiple printer drivers." The combination of Takeoka, Lobiondo and Onuma does not teach this element. The examiner relies on Takeoka as teaching determining printer disk storage capacity. However, since Takeoka does not teach *concurrent* parallel playback of spool data to multiple printer drivers, this claim is patentable for the reasons stated above in relation to claim 1.

The examiner has also rejected claims 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lobiondo (U.S. Patent No. 5,287,194) ("Lobiondo") and U.S. Patent No. 6,690,210 (Onuma) as applied to claim 18 above, and further in view of (U.S. Patent No. 6,891,632) ("Schwartz").

Claims 21 and 22 are dependent on claim 18, which comprises the element of “despooling said spool data in accordance with said cluster printing selection wherein said despooling comprises distribution of said print task to said ~~multiple~~ specific printing devices in substantial proportion to each of said ~~multiple~~ specific printing device’s output capacity and wherein said despooling further comprises concurrent parallel playback of spool data to multiple printer drivers.” The examiner relies on Schwartz to teach analysis of a printing device’s rasterization pipeline. However, Schwartz does not teach *concurrent* parallel playback of spool data to multiple printer drivers. Accordingly, the combination of Schwartz, Lobiondo and Onuma do not teach this element and this claim is patentable for the reasons stated above in relation to claim 1.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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